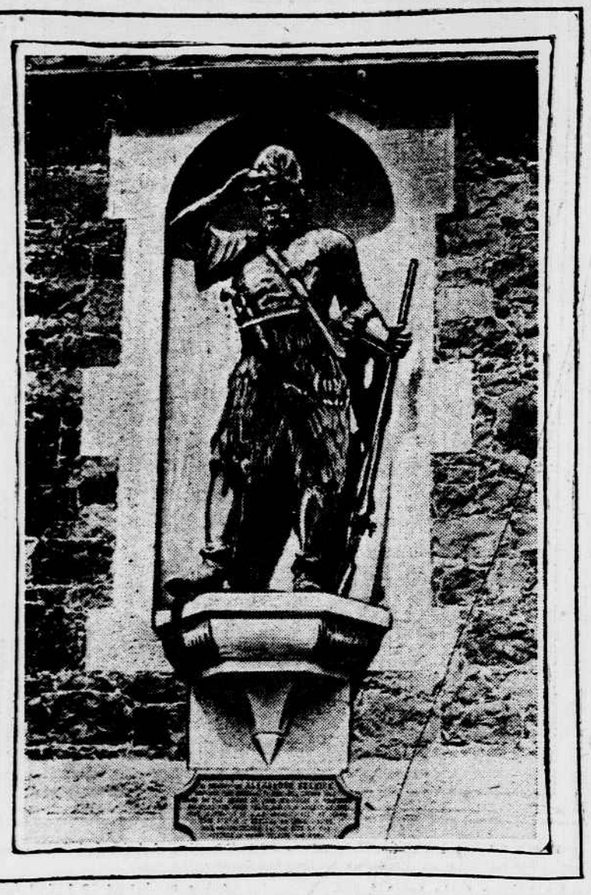
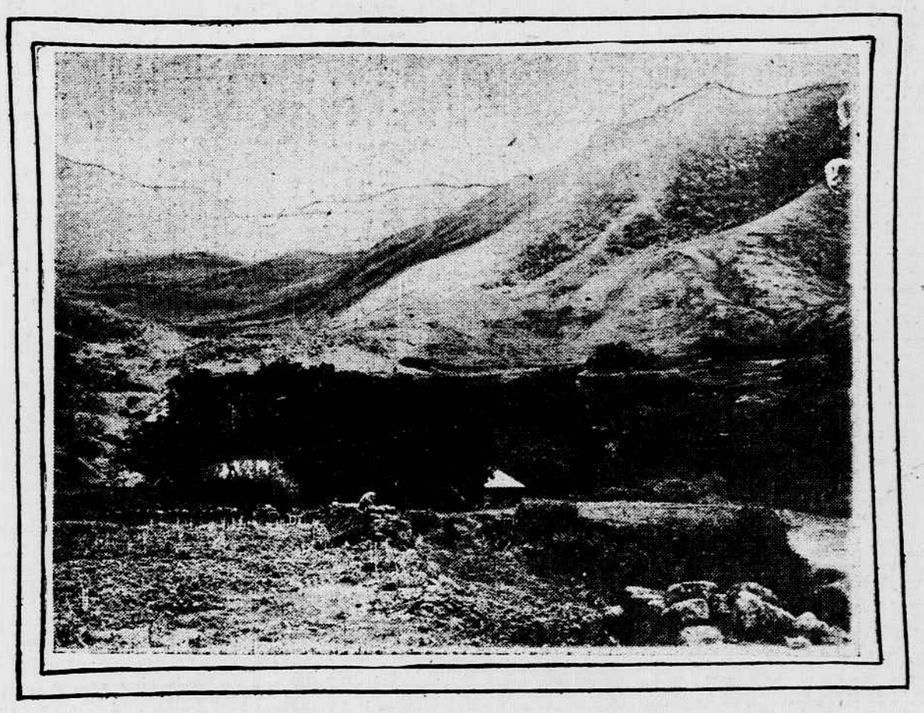
Islands of South America as Important Naval Bases



STATUE OF ALEXANDER SELKIRK, THE ORIGINAL OF ROBINSON CRUSOE, ON SITE OF COTTAGE WHERE HE WAS BORN IN SCOTLAND.

THEY Could Be Turned Into Valuable Stations in Case of a War Which Might Involve the South Pacific—The Galapagos and Juan Fernandez Groups—Their Neutrality in the Present War—Claim That Warships Have Violated Rights of Hospitality at Juan Fernandez—Flag of the United States Once Floated Over the Galapagos—Ecuador Will Want Assurance of Protection of Her Islands in the Future.



VIEW OF THE HILLS OF JUAN FERNANDEZ.

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S LOOKOUT ON JUAN FERNANDEZ.

BY CHARLES M. PEPPER.

WEST coast countries of South America are taking an unusual interest in some of the proposed European war settlements. In the newspapers there is considerable discussion of what principles of international law may be considered as established when the war is over, and what future Hague tribunals may be able to accomplish. But the chief concern is whether there will be, if not an international league to enforce peace, at least some international police power which will compel the observance of the soverign rights of neutral nations in their own territory.

The question relates more or less to two groups of islands on the west coast—the Galapagos, a few hundred miles off the coast of Ecuador, and the Juan Fernandez Islands, 400 miles off the Chilean coast.

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The Galapagos are a part of Ecuador. Juan Fernandez is Chilean territory. Yet the belligerents at the outset of the war contentiously ignored the rights of sovereignty of both countries. German, British and Japanese warships paid no attention to Ecuadorian rights. German and British warships openly violated the rights of hospitality at Juan Fernandez.

England made sort of an apology, pleading justification because the Germans had ignored Chile's sovereign rights. Germany, on her part, made an explanation which the Chilean government and the Chilean people considered little less than insulting.

It happens that both these groups of islands have considerable importance as naval bases in any war which might involve the south Pacific. The islands themselves have a historical interest as well as a naval one.

Notwithstanding that modern iconoclasts have insisted that Defoe did not place his hero, Alexander Selkirk, on Juan Fernandez, that island always will be regarded as Robinson Crusoe's island. It is of some importance to Chile. From it come resources in the way of sea foods, but it is of more importance as a base some hundreds of miles from the mainland. The occasional traveler who goes there gets a small steamer from Valparaiso, or probably some sailing vessel, which by chance puts in for temporary shelter, since there is little traffic.

The most imposing thing about Juan Fernandez seen from the sea approach is the hills. There is little vegetation. Robinson Crusoe's lookout, a rocky cone, dome-like in shape, looms up. There are a few local memorials of Defoe's hero.

It was left to a Scotch fellow-countrymen of the shipwrecked sailor to erect a statue, but, being a Scotchman, his patriotism caused him to choose as the site for it Selkirk's native village in Scotland. At the base of the monument there is an inscription which reads:

> In memory of Alexander Selkirk, mariner, the original of Robinson Crusoe, who lived in the Island of Juan Fernandez in complete solitude for four years and four months. He died in 1723, lieutenant of H. M. S. Weymouth, age 47 years.

This statue was erected by David Gillies, net manufacturer, on the site of the cottage in which Gilchrist was born. Robinson Crusoe's real name, it may be recalled, was Gilchrist.

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Chile's interest today is not in shipwrecked sailors and heroes of fiction of the past, but in her own sovereign rights as the territorial possessor of Juan Fernandez. The world war has shown the importance of the island, and Chile wants to be sure that in future world wars its neutrality as a part of Chilean territory will be respected.

The Galapagos Islands form an archipelago. There are a round dozen of them, lying 600 miles off the mainland of Ecuador on the equatorial line. The most important, both in the matter of resources and as a military base, is Chatham.

The coast line of the Galapagos group, or of any one of them, is most uninviting; usually there is a row of cactus stalks with the sands stretching back until the range of vision is exhausted. The islands are of volcanic origin, and the lava beds are their most noticeable feature.

Lava soil is good for sugar cane cultivation, and this has caused some of the adventurous spirits to visit the west coast to plant extensive sugar plantations, even claiming that in time they will rival Hawaii, where the islands also are of volcanic origin. But, while sugar cane is cultivated, the prospect is not that the industry will ever become a very extensive one.

On the Island of Chatham there are very good pasture lands and some ranches, where cattle and goats are raised.

In the old whaling days, when the fleets from New Bedford found profit in the waters off the west coast of South America, Chatham was an extensive supply station. The real rendezvous of the whaling fleet was at Paita, on the northern coast of Peru, but it was necessary to keep supplies at Chatham. This was a full century ago, and at that time the Galapagos were practically no man's land, since there was no South American government established firmly enough to maintain sovereignty over them.

It is a part of little known history that at one time the flag of the United States floated over the Galapagos, just as it did over the Isle of Pines, off the southern coast of Cuba, and various other islands in the Caribbean and in the waters of the Pacific.

Commodore Porter, who in the war of 1812 took the frigate Essex around Cape Horn and gave the British a taste of what the United States Navy really was, when he came up the west coast, took possession of the Galapagos in the name of the United States. Instead of being rewarded for his efforts to secure an outlying naval base, his action was disapproved in Washington and he was even court-martialed for exceeding his authority. This was notwithstanding the fact that in the waters off the island of Chatham he destroyed a British whaling fleet and caused other damage to the enemy country.

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Twenty years later, when the South American countries were free of Spain and had not gotten to fighting very extensively among themselves, the government of the great stretch of territory which was called Ecuador, took possession of the Galapagos and has since maintained its claim to sovereignty and exercised administrative powers.

An adventurous American named William Hollister, who helped a revolutionary chief to become President of Ecuador about the middle of the nineteenth century, was impressed with the idea that the United States should have a base in Galapagos. Hollister was a townsman of President Fillmore and he got a favorable hearing to the proposition that Ecuador should cede the Island of St. Charles, which was considered almost as good as Chatham, for a naval station.

The Ecuadorian revolutionary chief, who had been elected president through Hollister's aid, had acquiesced in the proposition and was ready to turn over the island. The Navy Department sent the sloop, St. Marys, which was then cruising off the west coast, to take possession, but the instructions seem to have been withdrawn or lost as there is no record that the United States ever actually took possession.

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During the civil war the Galapagos were looked on with longing eyes by the European powers, which thought that the United States as a nation was going to pieces and that European influence in the southern continent of the new world could be re-established. One of the numerous revolutionary presidents of Ecuador during that period actually entered into negotiations for ceding the islands to France, but nothing came of it.

When Mr. Blaine was Secretary of State and his pan-American policy was germinating he became convinced that the United States should have the Galapagos. The Navy Department was also strongly of this view. The constitution of Ecuador forbids the alienation of the national territory, of which the Galapagos are part. It was proposed to get around this provision by a perpetual lease. The Blaine negotiations and the obstacles they encountered are part of the diplomatic history of the United States and do not need to be reviewed in detail. It is sufficient to state that they fell through.

Afterward there were renewed efforts, sometimes originating in Ecuador and sometimes in the United States, to negotiate for the establishment of a naval base. The Navy Department, however, grew discouraged and did not press the subject on the executive branch of the government.

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After the Panama Canal Zone was acquired by the United States the view of most of the navy officials was that the establishment of an American naval station in the Galapagos was unnecessary, since the situation could be controlled from Panama. This view, however, was not a unanimous one. Some officers thought that we should have a station on the Island of Chatham as an outlying defense of Panama.

During President Taft's administration the proposition for the lease of one of the Galapagos was again brought forward. Some Ecuadorians and some Americans, who had large financial interests, were back of it.

Secretary Knox gave it perfunctory attention and let it go at that. There was no desire to add to the complications with Ecuador by enabling any of the rival political groups to raise an issue that "the Yankees" wanted to deprive Ecuador of her sovereignty over the islands, with a view to getting sovereignty over the mainland. That is the way the anti-American politicians of Ecuador usually put it.

When the Germans and the English contemptuously ignored Ecuador's sovereign rights in the Galapagos and when a Japanese warship in the harbor of Guayaquil ignored the Ecuadorian government's suggestion that it had stayed longer than was allowable under international law, a somewhat different view of the interest of the United States in the Galapagos was taken. Inquiries even were made whether the United States did not look upon these invasions of Ecuadorian sovereignty by the warships of the belligerents as violations of the Monroe doctrine.

After the German ships were swept from the west coast the acute phase of the question ended, and it became what was called a mere diplomatic incident by European governments. Nevertheless, whenever the war ends Ecuador may want some assurance as to the protection of the Galapagos in future wars so that her sovereignty may be respected, just as Chile will want it in regard to Juan Fernandez.

Horse's Practical Joke.

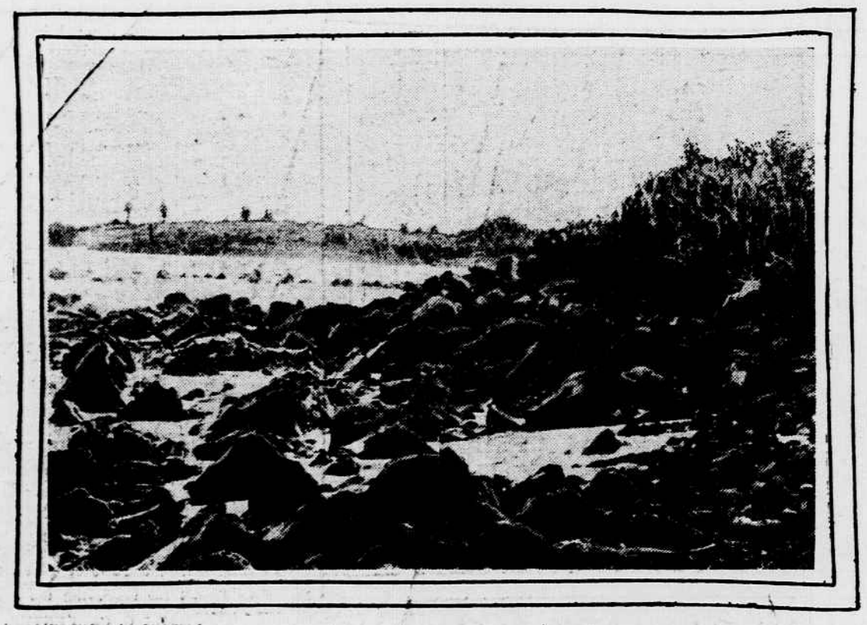
AN American sculptor found diversion in watching the tricks and peculiarities of the horses which served as models for some of his equine statues. He made friends with them all. When he was at work on a Sheridan statue he noticed that the big European draft horse began to fidget and shift his feet. After this had gone on for some minutes the sculptor said to the attendant groom: "The old fellow is really tired and bored. Take him out for a rest."

Among the horses employed by this sculptor was a thoroughbred that was a real joker. His name was Lex, and he posed for much of the sculptor's early work. Somehow he discovered that a table on which the artist worked was easily shaken. It was a board on trestles so arranged that the position of the board might be altered to almost any angle.

When Lex saw that the artist was busiest he would slide slowly and silently to the side of the table and turn his head to have a good look at the artist as he jostled at the table with his shoulder or hip. It was amusing at first, but it sometimes hampered the worker, and he would try a joke in return.

Lex had a place on the table that he invariably approached, and when he struck it always leaned on the same corner. Lex was not conscious that the artist placed his compass, with the pointed end out, barely half an inch extending over the edge of the table, and braced the other end against a weight.

The artist had not long to wait before Lex gently came up, and mischief could be seen in his eye. He took his usual place and then when the artist pretended to be very busy he pushed the table in his usual manner, pricked his shoulder on the points, and jumped back with a snort. He looked long and hard at the artist, but took his place of duty. If he did not think the joke was on him that time he at least never played the old prank again.



LAVA BED, GALAPAGOS ISLAND.

Floral Industry One of the Largest and Most Attractive in the Capital

ABOUT Fifty Commercial Florists Find Enough Trade in the District to Keep Them Busy—"Washington, City of Flowers"—Sidelights on the Industry—Acres and Acres of Glass-Roofed Houses—Capital Florists Awarded Medals—Problems That Are Confronted—Keeping a Summer Climate in Greenhouses During the Coldest Days of Winter.

PLANTING ROSE "SLIPS." THIS IS THE WAY AMERICAN BEAUTIES ARE STARTED.

ASSEMBLING THE PLANTS BEFORE STARTING THEM TO "THE POINT OF SALE."

"WASHINGTON, city of flowers!" That phrase might occur to the casual visitor in the nation's capital seeing the flowers here—to the one-day excursionist who happens along some of Washington's best kept streets. There is another basis for the title, however, with which the resident is, or should be, equally familiar. The basis is the floral industry here, one of the largest lines of business in the District of Columbia, and at the same time one of the most attractive.

About fifty commercial florists find enough trade in the capital to keep them busy supplying the demand. The people of Washington, as a whole, love flowers equally as much as did the great American for whom the city is named. Potted plants, cut flowers, well known varieties and flowers extraordinary all come in for their share of attention. One of the proofs of the flower love to be found which might be cited is that every florist's window seems an attraction for all who come and go. Perhaps it is only the passing glance of a busy worker; mayhap it is but a hurried glimpse from a car window, yet the interest and love is there.

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One of the interesting sidelights of the industry is that some of the most skillful florists of the country are located in Washington and vicinity. Whether this be the cause or the effect of Washington's interest in flowers would be a difficult proposition to solve.

Various florists of the city have won medals in national exhibitions. A number of them, by their skill, have earned an enviable reputation for the National Capital as a floral city.

A small army of men is employed in the growing of flowers to supply this industry, this not taking into consideration another group of no little size employed in the marketing of them. From one end of the year to the other there is always something to be done under the acres and acres of glass-roofed houses where so large a percentage of the hundreds of thousands of blossoms are grown and brought into perfection.

From sun-up to sun-down the florists and their helpers are kept busy. In winter work is a continuous process, extending over the entire twenty-four hours each day, although the workers are divided into shifts. Some one must keep the heating plant (one of the most important plants about a hothouse, by the way) going, and some one must watch the thermometers suspended in many parts of each greenhouse to see that the plants are getting exactly the amount of heat required. The temperature for various houses varies, according to the kind of plants growing in them, and according to whether it is desired to retard or "force" their growth.

Carelessness or inefficiency on the part of those in charge of seeing that the plants are given the proper amount of heat might cause the death in one night of thousands of flowers, and this would mean a proportionate loss in dollars and cents. Temperature has to be watched by day as well as by night, of course, but the day force being considerably larger than the number of night workers, the danger of insufficient heat through carelessness or inattention is greatly diminished.

Early in the morning the work of gathering the flowers is done for the most part. At this time all of the workers engage in picking the blooms for sale. Additional picking may be done later in the day, this being governed largely by conditions and demands from the point of sale.

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After being gathered, the flowers, as well as any potted plants which may be desired, are carried to a common point of assembly, and from here are taken to the store, market stand or other mart.

Before they are ready for sale, however, every plant receives a great deal of attention. Each is an individual and must be treated more or less according to its own peculiarities whether it comes from a bulb, a seed or a "slip." Certain varieties have to be transplanted a number of times in pots of an increasing size; others have to be transplanted in the open with the advent of warm weather, and all seem to need more or less humoring.

Even within the same varieties dissimilar traits may be found. For instance from a number of bulbs all of apparently the same quality, of approximately the same size and planted in the same soil plants of varying degrees of vitality are produced.

Some grow rapidly, others develop but slowly, and still others seem to take a middle course and grow at what might be termed the average speed. This characteristic forms one of the problems which must be faced by the florist of today. He wants his flowers at a certain time, the time depending upon the general public. He so calculates his planting that the blooms should appear, according to the average rate, at the time for which they are desired.

When he sees his plants are growing at a rate of speed above or below the average, or if for some reason he wishes to change that rate, he acts so as to bring about the desired change. If the growth be too speedy, the plants in question are removed to a cooler house; if it be too slow, more heat is allowed. Thus is the problem solved.

Insects prove another problem, as do also plant diseases. The layman might believe that greenhouse plants would be immune from parasites, but this does not hold true in practice. The florist must be constantly on guard against his minute enemies, for once started the parasites multiply quickly under the favorable conditions in the hothouse. As soon as any of the plant enemies are discovered remedial steps are taken quickly, with the result that the "enemy" is frequently beaten, for the time being, before war is even declared.

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Procuring the right kind of soil for the great variety of plants grown in the modern greenhouse is another problem. The same soil cannot be used repeatedly with profit for the growing of the same or similar varieties of flowers. If space were abundant, which, in the very nature of things, it cannot be in an up-to-date hothouse, "follow-up" crops might be used, thus forming a rotation of plants which would allow the repeated usage of the same soil from time to time for the desired flowers. As this plan is not considered a practical one by most of the flower raisers, however, the pots and other containers must be replenished anew from time to time.

None of these is the florist's greatest problem, however, according to one of the most prominent flower-raisers in the District. To obtain efficient, reliable assistants is the greatest difficulty in his opinion.

Vast quantities of materials are used. Thousands of panes of glass are used to cover the acres which are occupied by commercial greenhouses of the District. Care is taken not to break these, but with the best of care accidents will happen, and so will hailstorms.

Pots are bought by carload lots. These have to be replaced continuously, for not only are many broken, but they are sold in the case of potted plants. Many different sizes are used, running for the most part from small ones for the earliest plantings to what might be termed medium size.

Hundreds of tons of coal are burned to furnish heat for the plants during the cold months. Through the proper combination of heating pipes, windows and curtains the florist is enabled to manufacture his own climate and give the plant exactly the amount of heat, light and air required, despite outdoor conditions.

In many ways floristry is an attractive business. Although his hands and feet are frequently in the mud, the florist's head is well up among the blossoms; he lives close to nature and constantly has the inspiration of producing something beautiful.

Bill the Monopolist.

A SOCIALISTIC writer was talking in Boston about the dye trust recently formed in Germany.

"It includes all the German dye firms," he said. "Talk about a monopoly, eh? Why, it's as bad as Bill Smith.

"Bill Smith went off to the shore for a week or two, and on his return took Sam Jones to task severely.

"'Look here, Sam,' he said, 'I understand that while I was off at the shore you took advantage of my absence to hang round Mabel Green almost every night.'

"'No, Bill,' said Sam, 'you're mistaken. It's her sister, Sallie Green, that I've been hangin' round.'

"'Well,' said Bill, 'that makes no difference. I got my eye on both them girls.'"

The Pirate.

THE late George W. Peck, creator of "Peck's Bad Boy," was once condemning the unjust American copyright law.

"They get a bad name," he said, "these publishers who steal foreigners' writings.

"A publisher took me home to dinner at his flat the other evening. In the library the children were making a furious racket.

"'What are you doing?' the publisher asked.

"'We're playin' pirates,' said the oldest boy.

"'Pirates?' said I. 'But there's no sea here. How can you be pirates without a sea?'

"'Oh, we don't need any sea,' said the boy. 'We're literary pirates, like you, pa, ain't we?'"

After All.

ALTHOUGH the late Henry James, the American novelist, lived abroad, he was very proud of his fellow countrymen.

One evening at the Athenaeum Club in London Mr. James dined with Joseph Chamberlain.

Mr. James praised the English highly during dinner. He praised their dress, their manners, their country life and even their climate.

Mr. Chamberlain listened to this praise attentively. At the end he said, expecting a further compliment for Great Britain:

"Mr. James, if you were not an American, what would you want to be?"

"If I were not an American," Mr. James answered promptly, "I'd want to be one."